The Name of Ottawa.

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(*Extracts from an address delivered Nov. 19th, 1897.*)

The easiest way to obtain accurate information concerning the term Ottawa, Outaouais, Outaoua, is by perusing the different works of the 17th Century mentioned below, and leave aside all other books for the moment, until you have digested the texts of those authors, for they actually saw what they write about. Whoever dealt with the matter subsequently could not be in a position to make a clear case of it.

Take the following authors as the only base of information Champlain, Sagard, Marie de l'Incarnation, Dollier, Perrot, La Potherie, the Jesuit papers, and the records of the Conseil Souverain of Quebec.

Champlain met the people in question (1615) and called them Standing Hair, because of the fashion they had to dress their hair upright. This was in Lake Huron.

The Hurons, who spoke a language totally different from the Standing Hairs, and who lived in open fields, designated them as the Men of the Woods, to indicate that they were roaming in the forests (county of Bruce and Manitoulin Island.) In Huron-Iroquois language this was Ondataoua. The French translated it into Gens des Bois quite correctly.

There is no indication of the name by which the Outaouas designated their own nation.

Champlain : Cheveux Relevés : Standing Hair. No other name.

Sagard, 1625 : Cheveux Relevés and Gens des Bois are like one nation he says.

Jesuit Relations, 1654-56 : Ondataouaouat, Outaouak ; 1669, Outaouac.

Journal des Jesuits, 1654 : Ondata8a8ak *alias* Sta8ak, Sta8at. (8 is the softest sound of w.)

Conseil Souverain de Quebec, 1663, 1670 : Sta8au, Sta8ak.

Marie de l'Incarnation, 1660 : Outaouak.

Dollier de Casson, 1665 : Outaoua.

Nicolas Perrot 1660-1715 : Outaoua.

La Potherie 1700 : Outaouak.

That writers who came after 1700, and who never had any intercourse with the nation before its dispersion, took upon themselves to modify the spelling and pronunciation of the name by making it "Ottawa" and "Outaouais," has no effect on the above authorities; but it puzzles everybody and makes us believe that there is yet a problem to be solved in that direction.

There is no doubt that Ottawa and Outaouais are both wrong.

The French made "Outaoua" out of "Ondatahoua." No other explanation can stand the test of the authors of the 17th Century. The plural took k.

The final sound is a broad and open note: oua, ouat, ouak, ouac, 8ack. In French (Normandy) letter a is broad, like aw in English. When you meet with ouak and ouac, rest assured that this is written to satisfy the pronunciation of some Frenchmen who use the flat a, such as in Gignac, Frontenac, Balzac (south west of France.)

Ondata, if corrupted into Outa as I believe, is less easy to explain. One would conceive that it was Oudata, but all the printed works and all the manuscripts of the 17th Century have On instead of Ou.

The figure 8 placed in the centre of the word is there to represent a soft w: 8anakong for Wanakong, Kaminisk8e for Kaminiskwe. Eight is "huit" in French and must be sounded with that particularly soft tone the letter u has in the north and west of France. It is not ou nor w; to pronounce it you must round your lips and try to whistle softly. It is not generally found practicable to any other people but those who have used it from the cradle. That sole letter in the mouth of a man suffices to detect how far his origin is French.

For instance, ask an Englishman to pronounce *Huron*— and hear the word from the tongue of a Frenchman, you will understand that the French u is not at all like the English one.

Now that we have said that Outaoua comes from Ondataoua, let us see the opinion of modern authors who have given a different etymology without consulting the true sources in this matter.

Some suppose that the expression, Grandes Oreilles applied to the Outaouas is a translation of the latter name. We have already shown that Ondataoua means the Men of the Woods. The French said Grandes Oreilles: Large Ears, for the same reason they qualified them also Cheveux Relevés,

those whose hair is tied up on the top of the head, those who expose their ears, by contrast with other races wearing long floating hair covering the neck, the ears and part of the cheeks.

The final sound ouais: Outaouais, is the result of pure ignorance, and is not more than eighty years old.

The form Ottawa did not exist during the French regime; it was created by the English evidently from Outaoua.

As to the history of those people we have so often seen modern maps and books which place them in our valley that it seems impossible to remove that belief from the minds of of readers.

They were principally located in Manitoulin Island when Champlain met some of them at the mouth of French River in 1615. Afterwards they took refuge in Wisconsin for fear of the Iroquois. In 1654 they opened a trade with Montreal by the route of Lake Nipissing and the Grand River, then a perfect wilderness without any Indians on its shores. Gradually the Grand River became known as the passage of the Outaouas, the Outaoua. This application of the name of a far away nation to a Canadian River can be followed in the manuscripts covering the period of 1670-1700.

In the localities where the Outaouas emigrated two hundred years ago there are now ten or twelve towns, villages, railway stations and counties called "Ottawa." This is only right, although somewhat overdone.

The books and maps published in our century caused the Canadians to consider the "valley of the Ottawa" as the ancient residence of the Outaouas, and that name was imposed in good faith upon young Bytown. It is the consecration of an error. The Capital of Canada stands before us under a foreign name.